

Message Text

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 01 TUNIS 00220 01 OF 02 112135Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SSO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08
INR-07 LAB-04 NSAE-00 SIL-01 INRE-00 PA-01 PRS-01
USIE-00 /045 W
-----121474 112213Z /66

O 112010Z JAN 78
FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 9529
INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
AMEMBHD DTTQMIRO
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY RABAT
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 1 OF 2 TUNIS 0220

PARIS AND COPENHAGEN FOR LABATT

E.O.11652: NA
TAGS: ELAB PGOV TS
SUBJ: HABIB ACHOUR AND UGTT BITE BULLETS: A RESIGNATION
AND A DECLARATION

REF: TUNIS 0191

1. SUMMARY. HABIB ACHOUR, SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE
GENERAL FEDERATION OF TUNISIAN WORKERS (UGTT), ANNOUNCES
RESIGNATION FROM DESTOURIAN SOCIALIST PARTY (PSD)
OFFICES. UGTT, USING MILITANT LANGUAGE, HIGHLIGHTS
ALIENATION -- IF NOT DIVORCE -- FROM GOVERNMENT ON ALL ASPECTS
OF DOMESTIC POLICY IN FINAL COMMUNIQUE ISSUED AT CLOSE OF UGTT
NATIONAL COUNCIL CONFERENCE. GOVERNMENT AND PARTY FIGURES EXPRESS

PREDICTABLE REACTIONS.
LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 02 TUNIS 00220 01 OF 02 112135Z

2. IN A MOVE WHICH HAD BEEN ANTICIPATED AT LEAST SINCE THE
JAN 8 OPENING OF THE UGTT NATIONAL CONFERENCE, HABIB
ACHOUR FORMALLY RESIGNED BOTH FROM THE POLITICAL BUREAU
AND FROM THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE PSD. IN A PRESS
CONFERENCE FOLLOWING THE CLOSING OF THE CONFERENCE, HE
STATED THAT THESE RESIGNATIONS WERE THE FRUITS OF HIS

PERSONAL DECISION, BUT THAT HE HAD BEEN SO ADVISED BY MANY MEMBERS OF THE UGTT BASE AND LEADERSHIP. AN APPARENT UNBRIDGEABLE CHASM HAD WIDENED BETWEEN THE PERCEPTIONS OF THE GOVERNMENT AND PARTY ON THE ONE HAND, AND THE UGTT ON THE OTHER OVER THE CURRETN SOCIAL SITUATION IN TUNISIA. THUS, ACHOUR AND COMPANY EXPRESSED THE GROWING INCONSISTENCY OF SERVING TWO MASTERS, BY REJECTING ONE OF THEM. AT SAME TIME, HE DID NOT CALL FOR A BLOC QUITTING OF PARTY BY UGTT, AND HE STATED THAT EACH UGTT MEMBER SHOULD BE LEFT FREE TO MAKE HIS OWN POLITICAL CHOICE AND TO ADHER TO WHATEVER POLITICAL CURRENT THAT HE DESIRES.

3. THE UGTT FINAL COMMUNIQUE, ISSUED ALMOST CONCURRENTLY WITH ACHOUR'S RESIGNATION ANNOUNCEMENT, CONSIST OF A BILL OF PARTICULARS AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT'S SOCIO-ECONOMIC POLICIES, A DEFENSE OF THE PURITY OF ITS OWN MOTIVES AND ACTIONS, AND A DECLARATION OF ITS CONTINUING MILITANCE. SOME OF ITS HIGHLIGHTS WERE: THE UGTT'S REFUSAL TO ACCEPT "A POLICY OF THE GOVERNMENT ORIENTED TOWARD THE CONSOLIDATION OF A CAPITALISTIC CLASS TO THE DETRIMENT OF THE NATIONAL INTEREST, INASMUCH AS THAT CLASS ALIGNS ITS INTERESTS TO THOSE OF EXPLOITATIVE FOREIGN CAPITAL;" ITS DECLARATION THAT THE UNION WAS NOT HOSTILE TO LOCAL PRIVATE CAPITAL WHICH PARTICIPATED IN NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT BUT THAT IT WOULD NOT IGNORE ILLICIT AND SCANDALOUS ENRICHMENT DERIVING FROM LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 03 TUNIS 00220 01 OF 02 112135Z

UNCONTROLLED PRICES, SPECULATION, MONOPOLY, AND LABOR

EXPLOITATION; ITS REPEATED CHRONIC CHARGES OF POOR MANAGEMENT WITHIN PUBLIC ENTERPRISES TO THE DETRIMENT BOTH OF THEIR WORKERS AND OF THE PUBLIC; AND ITS INSISTENCE UPON UNION AUTONOMY AND INDEPENDENCE OF ACTION. SOME SPECIFIC ECONOMIC OBSERVATIONS AND CRITICISMS FOLLOWED: SOCIAL INEQUALITY HAS INCREASED DUE TO A DISTRIBUTION OF INCOME WHICH INCREASINGLY FAVORS SALARIED OVER WAGE WORKERS AND WHICH CONCENTRATES THE NATIONAL WEALTH IN THE HANDS OF A PRIVILEGED MINORITY; SALARIES AND WAGES HAVE DECOINED TO LESS THAN HALF THE NATIONAL INCOME WHILE PER CAPITAL NATIONAL INCOME HAS GROWN AT A MUCH FASTER RATE THAN HAS THE NATIONAL MINIMUM WAGE; THE LOW RATE OF FORMATION OF NEW JOBS HAD CREATED A GROWING CRISIS AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE, STEPPED UP RURAL-TO URBAN MIGRATION, AND FORCED THE EMIGRATION OF TUNISIAN MANPOWER. THE COMMUNIQUE ALLEGES THAT THESE POLICIES AND CONDITIONS STAND IN CONTRADICTION TO THE GOVERNMENTS STATED GOALS OF UPGRADING THE TUNISIAN WORKER AND ENRICHING HIS LIFE, BRING GREATER SOCIAL JUSTICE, AND HARNESSING HIS

ENERGIES TO NATIONAL AND HARMONIOUS DEVELOPMENT.

4. AMONG RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE UGTT COMMUNIQUE WERE THESE:

- (A) AN INCOME POLICY TO ASSURE A MORE EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION AS BETWEEN SALARIED AND WAGE WORKERS;
 - (B) AN EMPLOYMENT POLICY WHICH WOULD MOBILIZE ALL WORKERS AND WHICH WOULD ABSORB RETURNING MIGRANT WORKERS INTO THE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT EFFORT;
 - (C) PRICES PUT UNDER RIGOROUS CONTROL AND A REEXAMINATION OF THE FREE MARKET THEORY;
 - (D) THE CREATION OF TWO COMMISSIONS, ONE TO ELABORATE A NATIONAL PRICE INDEX, THE OTHER TO EFFECT FISCAL REFORM;
- LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 04 TUNIS 00220 01 OF 02 112135Z

- (E) THE ADOPTION OF FIRM MEASURES TO ELIMINATE POOR MANAGEMENT PRACTICES IN PUBLIC ENTERPRISES AND THE OPENING OF AN INVESTIGATION INTO ABUSIVE ENRICHMENT AND SPECULATION;
- (F) A HOUSING POLICY WHICH WOULD END EXPLOITATION AND SPECULATION;
- (G) A BOLD AGRARIAN POLICY WHICH WOULD FIX FARM WORKERS TO THE LAND AND OFFER THEM GRATER INCENTIVES FOR GREATER PRODUCTION;

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

NNN

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 01 TUNIS 00220 02 OF 02 112145Z

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SSO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08

INR-07 LAB-04 NSAE-00 SIL-01 INRE-00 PA-01 PRS-01

USIE-00 /045 W

-----121578 112212Z /66

O 112010Z JAN 78

FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 9530

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY RABAT
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 2 OF 2 TUNIS 0220

PARIS AND COPENHAGEN FOR LABATT

(H) RESOLUTE ACTION TO REDUCE TUNISIA'S ECONOMIC
DEPENDENCE ON CERTAIN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES AND TO PROTECT
THE NATION "AGAINST THE FLUCTUATIONS OF THE CAPITALIST
ECONOMY WHICH IS ENTERING ITS FINAL YEARS IN AN ACUTE
CRISIS AND WHICH THREATENS TO PERSIST, EVEN IN THOSE
INDUSTIAL STATES WHICH REFUSE TO ESTABLISH A JUST
ECONOMIC ORDER FOUNDED UPON COOPERATION WITH THE
THIRD WORLD AND NOT UPON ITS EXPLOITATION AND IMPOVERISHMENT
AND FINALLY,
(I) UGTT PARTICIPATION ON THE MANAGING BOARDS OF ECONOMIC
AND SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS.

5. THE UGTT THEN ENUMERATED VARIOUS ACTIONS THE GOVERN-
MENT AND OR THE PARTY HAD TAKEN AGAINST IT: REPEATED
EFFORTS TO DIVIDE THE WORKING CLASS AND DEPRIVE IT
OF ITS LEGITIMATE LEADERSHIP; THE USE OF PARTY CELLS
LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 02 TUNIS 00220 02 OF 02 112145Z

AMONG PROFESSIONAL GROUPS AS DUAL UNIONS; OPEN SENTIMENTS
FOR "VIOLENCE AND INTIMIDATION" DURING LABOR UNREST ON
THE PART OF THE AUTHORITIES PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGNS AND
DISINFORMATION AGAINST THE UGTT AND ITS OTHER

PROVOCATIONS DURING STRIKES TO CONFUSE PUBLIC OPINION;
"POLITICIZATION" OF UNION DEMANDS TO CREATE THE APPEARANCE
OF A POWER STRUGGLE; ENCOURAGEMENT OF DISSIDENCE AND
DESERTATION WITHIN THE UGTT RANKS; REFUSAL TO NEGOTIATE
IN GOOD FAITH; AND VIOLATION OF THE PHYSICAL INTEGRITY
OF UGTT HEADQUARTERS BY THE SECURITY FORCES.

6. IN CONCLUDING, THE UGTT COMMUNIQUE: PROCLAIMS THAT
THE UNITY OF WORKERS IS THE ROCK AGAINST WHICH WILL BREAK
ALL MACHINATIONS AGAINST THE NATIONAL INTEREST; AFFIRMS
THAT THE LANGUAGE OF INTIMIDATION AND VIOLENCE IS OUTWORN,
ANACHRONISTIC, AND INAPPROPRIATE TO TUNISIA'S CURRENT
SITUATION; EXPRESSES ITS CONVICTION THAT IT HAS BECOME
URGENT TO CHANGE THE STYLE AND THE METHODS BY WHICH THE AFFAIRS
OF THE COUNTRY ARE CONDUCTED, IN ORDER TO AVOID A RUPTURE
BETWEEN SOCIAL CLASS AND BETWEEN GENERATIONS. THE

NATIONAL COUNCIL THEN CALLED FOR "RADICAL AND PEACEFUL
PURIFICATION" OF THE POLITICAL CLIMATE AND DEMANDED

RESPECT FOR THE CONSTITUTION "IN ALL OF ITS ARTICLES," PARTICULARLY THOSE DEALING WITH FUNDAMENTAL LIBERTIES WHICH GUARANTEE UNION RIGHTS. THE COUNCIL AS WELL DEMANDED THE FREEING OF POLITICAL AND UNION PRISONERS. IT ONCE AGAIN UNDERLINED ITS DETERMINATION TO PRESERVE ITS CHARACTER AND INDEPENDENCE WHICH TRANSCEND ALL POLITICAL CURRENTS AND PERSONAL AMBITIONS.

7. GOVERNMENT SPOKESMEN AND THE PARTY PRESS WERE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 03 TUNIS 00220 02 OF 02 112145Z

UNIFORMLY CRITICAL OF ACHOUR'S RESIGNATION FROM HIS PARTY/POSTS, ALTHOUGH REACTION IS NOT YET AVAILABLE ON THE UGTT FINAL COMMUNIQUE. PRIME MINISTER HEDI NOUIRA, IN A PARIS PRESS CONFERENCE, EXPRESSED HIS REGRET OVER ACHOUR'S ACTIONS, BUT STATED THAT HE WAS FREE TO DO AS HE WILLED SINCE THERE WERE NO CONSTRAINTS IN TUNISIA. HE LAID THE RESIGNATIONS AT THE DOOR OF "INTERNAL POLITICS AND THE CONFRONTATION OF IDEAS." NOUIRA THEN EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT THEY DID NOT SIGNAL A RUPTURE BETWEEN THE UGTT AND THE GOVERNMENT, AND THAT THE DIALOGUES SHOULD ALWAYS CONTINUE. (ALTHOUGH WE HAVE FEW DETAILS ABOUT THE REAL NATURE OF THE PRIME MINISTER'S TRIP TO FRANCE-- WHICH IS DEFINED IN THE LOCAL PRESS AS A "PRIVATE VISIT"-- NOUIRA HAS MET WITH HIGHEST LEVEL OF GOV, INCLUDING THE PRESIDENT, PRIME MINISTER, FOREIGN MINISTER, AND THE MAYOR OF PARIS...AS WELL AS CALLING PRESS CONFERENCE. NOUIRA IS REPORTED TO HAVE RETURNED TO TUNISIA THIS EVENING, JANUARY 10.)

8. COMMENT. WE ARE NEITHER YET WILLING NOR ABLE TO VENTURE A DEFINITIVE ANALYSIS ON THE MEANINGS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THESE ONE-DAY OLD EVENTS. BUT SOME OBSERVATIONS NOW MAY CLARIFY THE PUZZLE LATER. THE UGTT FINAL COMMUNIQUE BEARS A STRIKING RESEMBLANCE TO A PARTY PLATFORM... WHICH IT WELL MAY BECOME. (THE MEETING DEALT WITH NEED TO FORM YOUTH GROUPS, PRESS AGENCY, DAILY PAPER, ETC.) AN IMPRESSIVE DIVERSITY OF SOURCES, INCLUDING ACHOUR HIMSELF, FOR MONTHS HAVE TELEGRAPHED TO US THE UGTT'S INTENTION TO FOUND A NEW TUNISIAN LABOR PARTY. THE NATIONAL COUNCIL'S ACTIONS SEEM ANOTHER STEP IN THAT DIRECTION. IT IS INTERESTING TO NOTE THAT ACHOUR'S AND UGTT'S ACTIONS DO NOT SPELL A DIVORCE ON ALL ISSUES. ACHOUR, IN HIS PRESS CONFERENCE, AND NATIONAL COUNCIL IN ITS COMMUNIQUE, MAKE A POINT OF NOTING THAT WHILE THERE IS STRONG DISAGREEMENT ON DOMESTIC ISSUES, UGTT IS "ON CONTRARY, TOTALLY IN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 04 TUNIS 00220 02 OF 02 112145Z

ACCORD WITH THE GOVERNMENT'S FOREIGN POLICY."
MULCAHY

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: UNION GOVERNMENT RELATIONS, PERSONNEL RESIGNATIONS, LABOR UNION OFFICIALS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 11 jan 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978TUNIS00220
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780017-0003
Format: TEL
From: TUNIS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780174/aaaackpe.tel
Line Count: 283
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: f33e8be4-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 6
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 TUNIS 191
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3791040
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: HABIB ACHOUR AND UGTT BITE BULLETS: A RESIGNATION AND A DECLARATION
TAGS: ELAB, PGOV, TS
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/f33e8be4-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014